

Socialist Worker



Local and European Election Special

When you cast your vote in May.....

MAKE LABOUR PAY

Vote your local People Before Profit Candidate No 1.



ON 23 May the people of Ireland will have an historic opportunity.

Almost 100 years after the Easter Rising, we will finally have the chance to break the grip of the three main political parties.

Fianna Fail, backed-up by Fine Gael and their Labour lackeys have held a virtual stranglehold on power since the founding of the state.

Working with the Catholic Church and the business lobby, these parties have made sure that wealth and privilege have been reserved for a tiny minority in the Irish establishment.

When the economy is doing well, these groups grab the lion's share.

When the economy slips into crisis, they use their power to ensure that tax payers foot the bill.

This has been the way for almost a century - ordinary people doing the work, political elites helping the rich to rob our labour and control our society.

People Power

The People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA) has a very different vision for politics in Ireland.

We believe in a radically democratic society, with people's needs placed at the centre of everything.

Ireland is currently one of the very richest countries in the world.

According to the Irish Central Bank, the country's assets run into the hundreds of billions.

Yet despite this, one in five kids goes to school hungry and almost one million citizens are forced to live in grinding poverty. This is the result of political choices being made by the elites.

It doesn't actually have to be this way. But the world over, the ruling classes threaten us with economic terrorism.

Trading on fear and intimidation, the people who control our society tell us there is no other way.

We might not like their corruption or their cronyism, but what other options do we have?

Grassroots Movement

Right across the country the People Before Profit Alliance is answering this question.

From Donegal in the North to Waterford in the



South, PBP is building a genuine movement based on the ideals of solidarity, equality and inclusivity.

All told, we are fielding 43 candidates nationwide, making PBP the largest left wing movement contesting the elections.

We also pride ourselves on having the highest percentage of female candidates (40%).

Women have borne the brunt of the cutbacks meted out by the political establishment.

From carer's grants to children's allowances, women have had to put up with 6 years of austerity.

But with the elections just around the corner, we are suddenly being told that everything will soon be ok.

What Recovery?

Media hacks and government spin doctors are falling over themselves to talk up an economic recovery.

But why should we believe these people when they have lied and threatened us so many times in the past.

Even if there is a recovery, most of the benefits

will continue to flow into the pockets of the wealthy.

Business as usual is all the mainstream parties can actually offer us and so it is time to make a radical decision.

If you believe in the importance of grassroots democracy then vote for People Before Profit on 23 May.

Better still, get involved in your local campaign and add your weight to a decisive shift in Irish politics.

In a couple of weeks, we finally get the chance to make Labour pay for all of their rotten betrayals.

Let's not waste this historic opportunity.

Make Labour pay.

Vote People Before Profit in May.

**To get involved call
0872839964**

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**Meet some of our local
election candidates.**

Economic Recovery – media hype or genuine article?

By Kieran Allen

The mainstream media and the political elite are claiming that Ireland is experiencing an economic recovery. They know that the population is tired of austerity and are worried about popular reaction to water charges.

They are also desperate to spin a good story to salvage their electoral fortunes. But behind the talk of recovery lies gross exaggeration and deeply cynical lies.

The claim about recovery rests on three main elements – a supposed growth in jobs in 2013; an increase in investment; statistical manipulation.

Where are the jobs?

The government boasts that 60,000 jobs were added in 2013 and that unemployment levels are dropping.

But even economists who accept this figure are puzzled: If the numbers of jobs are growing, they ask, why is there not an increase in total earnings?

Total earnings actually fell last year and consumer demand declined slightly by 1.1 percent.

This 'puzzle' is solved when we look a bit deeper behind the government spin and examine what is really happening.

Labour Activation: The Labour Minister, Joan Burton, has organised a massive campaign to push people off social welfare onto a host of forced labour schemes.

There are currently 86,000 people on these schemes and the Central Statistics Office counts them as employed.

Yet on the Gateway scheme, for example, people are forced to work for just €1 extra an hour for 22 months.

Farming: 27,000 jobs were supposedly created last year in farming. But this is a statistical trick.

The Central Statistics Office previously underestimated the numbers and did an adjustment.

There has been a rise in incomes among bigger beef and dairy farmers – Fine Gael's rural base – but it has not translated into that many jobs.

Growth on poverty wages: One of the sectors which has actually grown is tourism – mainly because of shifting trends due to climate change.

The official figures show that – aside from agriculture – the biggest area of employment growth is in 'hospitality'.

Yet this is also the sector where wages fell faster than elsewhere.

After a six year long recession, there has been a small growth in employment but the real reason for the fall in unemployment figures is actually emigration.

Alongside Spain, Ireland has the highest level of emigration of the older EU 15 countries.

Even stockbroker economists, Goodbody's, noted that 'Somewhat surprisingly employment for the 20-34 year old cohort has not seen any recovery and has fallen 0.3% in Q2 2012'. They 'forget' the obvious answer – they are on the planes to Australia and Canada.

Where is the investment?

The main mover of economic activity is investment.



Wealthy individuals who control capital often go on an 'investment strike' when their rates of profit decline.

After the Celtic Tiger crash, investment in Ireland shrank from €48 billion to a mere €16 billion. This type of crash was reminiscent of the 1930s.

The new claims about a recovery rest on evidence that investment has picked up again.

And, indeed, there was an increase last year – as it grew to €17.2 billion. But this is still less than half the level of

investment that was occurring in 2007!

In addition, there are two unusual reasons why even this investment is picking up.

One is the new property bubble that is underway. As well as deliberate government efforts to nudge up a housing boom, there has been an unprecedented influx of capital into Irish commercial property.

Here is Goodbody's salivating at the prospect:

'The scale of interest in Irish commercial property is nothing short of phenomenal.'

'After growing to €2bn in 2013, commercial property investment is on course to double in 2014 on the back of a rush of supply coming to the market from several sources.'

The main reason for this is that foreign capital is looking for quick and easy returns on investment.

The US and EU have cut interest rates dramatically to stimulate their economies and so the rich are borrowing before scouring the world's property markets for a fast buck.

The other reason has to do with the

flight of some major corporations to 'respectable' tax havens like Ireland.

The fiscal crisis of the US state has led to a new rhetoric against tax havens from the Obama administration and ironically this is benefiting Ireland in the short term.

Many drug and IT companies are relocating regional headquarters in Ireland to avoid taxes – while maintaining an aura of respectability.

The Dark Clouds

Underlying the hype, there is a much more serious problem brewing for Irish capitalism.

Since the early 1980s, the driver of the Irish economy was foreign investment in manufacturing. Yet today this has entered a period of major decline.

Today there are 243,000 people working in industry compared to 319,000 in 2000. The main driver of this industrial base was US investment in computers, pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

Computer manufacturing has long since migrated elsewhere and now the pharmaceutical industry has entered major difficulties.

Companies like Pfizer make much of their profit from branded drugs that have a 20 year long patent which prevents rivals making cheaper versions.

But many of these patents are now running out and so the industry is in decline.

With the decline of US investment in manufacturing, Irish capital is falling back to an economic model that brings more misery and emigration.

In the 1920s, when De Valera posed as a radical, he denounced Ireland's status as an 'out garden' of the British Empire – supplying food to its industrial centres.

Yet a hundred years later, the longer terms hopes of Irish capitalism are once again being founded on a food industry dominated by big farmers and a tourist and hospitality sector that grows alongside it.

In addition, the Irish elite continue to play a dangerous game of building a form of 'tax haven capitalism'.

Whereas in the past major multinationals came to Ireland in search of cheap labour to manufacture real goods, today they create a much smaller number of jobs to gain respectability for their status as a tax haven.

These two main economic strategies will lead to adverse effects for the population at large.

There will never be enough jobs and there will be a near permanent pattern of emigration that will persist into the future.

With the exception of a small number of highly skilled jobs in information technology and financial speculation, the majority of jobs created will be low paid and often precarious.

And as tax subsidies on profit remain at the core of economic strategy, the burden of funding basic, low quality public services will fall on the population at large.

As a result they will pay a higher level of tax on their wages – and more indirect taxes than elsewhere.

If this is what a recovery looks like, then shudder to think what the next recession will bring.



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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.

A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.

To destroy capitalism, we need to overthrow the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

The 'War on Terrorism' is a crude tactic to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the

working class

We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We oppose homophobic attitudes which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Conservative government.

Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that 'nationalism is a tool of reaction'.

We want to see an Irish workers' republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism revolutionists need to organise in a revolutionary party.

This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

We stand for fighting trade unionists and for independent rank and file action.

Join the Socialists

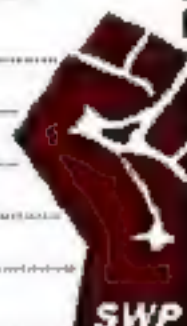
Fill in the form and send to:
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Email _____

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European Election Special

Vote No. 1 BRÍD SMITH For Europe

✓ *Cancel the Debt*✓ *Oppose Water Charges
& Cuts in Public Services*✓ *For Real Jobs & Social Housing*✓ *Defend Workers' Rights*✓ *People Power to Resist Austerity*+ Facebook  Brid for Europe+ Twitter  @bridsmith+ www.bridsmith.net

Brid Smith is People Before Profit's candidate for Europe in the Dublin constituency. If elected, she will stand up to the EU bureaucracy and fight for the following policies:

No Water Charges: The EU has ordered the Irish government to impose water charges of about €300 a year. Brid Smith is totally opposed to these charges. Instead of wasting money on meters, we should be investing in the water infrastructure to reduce waste. A vote for Brid Smith is a vote for outright resistance to the water taxes.

Defend Public Services, Stop Privatisation: The EU bureaucracy pushes privatisation and wants to cut back on public spending. The gov-

ernment has already sold off parts of Bord Gáis to a British company with a record of hiking up gas prices to bolster profits. Brid Smith says tax the rich to fund our schools and hospitals.

Cancel the National Debt: The European Central Bank and their Irish allies made us responsible for the private gambling debts of bankers. A vote for Brid Smith is a signal that the Irish people want to unilaterally cancel EU imposed debt.

A Dublin Living Wage: Workers have experienced six years of pay cuts and freezes. With talk of economic recovery, we need to press claims for a living wage. Rents, property taxes and the cost

of living in Dublin are higher than elsewhere – wages should reflect this. We need a Dublin living allowance. We need strong unions that fight for wage rises.

Real Jobs, Not Forced labour schemes: The EU promotes 'labour activation' measures and the Irish government has introduced schemes like Gateway which makes people work for 22 months for just €1 an hour. These schemes are replacing real public sector jobs. Brid Smith says we need a major public works programme including 'climate jobs' to counter global warming.

No to Racism: The right and their friends in the media try to scapegoat migrant workers. They want us to turn on each other rather than fight

the wealthy elite who caused the economic crisis. Brid Smith stands for full rights for migrant workers and the proper treatment of asylum seekers.

Equality for all: Brid Smith supports abortion rights for Irish women. She is against sexism and homophobia and supports marriage equality for LGBT people.

Real Democracy, End the rule of the corporate lobbyists: There are 15,000 lobbyists in Brussels who spend €1 billion a year promoting their corporate interests. If elected, Brid Smith will shine a light on their activities and seek to drive them out. She will fight for a democratic Europe that is built on solidarity.

A Message From Bríd Smith – The Workers' Candidate

"Sometimes EU directives can be used to improve workers conditions. But, invariably, the Irish government tries to weaken these mild measures.

I shall highlight every directive that can be used to help workers and fight for them to be made Irish law. But I will also highlight EU attacks on workers' rights.

The EU has recently established a 'nominal unit labour cost' measure which seeks to limit wage rises over a three year period.

The EU Commission is trying to block strong health and safety measures under the guise of removing 'red tape'. As an MEP I shall act as a watchdog for workers rights.

To that end I will not take the massive 'fat cat' EU salary but only the average workers' wage and will donate the rest to political campaigning for working people."

Bríd Smith's record

BRÍD Smith is not a typical politician. She does not lie or make false promises to get elected like Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Labour do.

Brid is an activist in the Unite trade union and works as a tutor training shop stewards to represent workers. She has devoted her whole adult life to the struggle for workers' rights, women's rights and the rights of all the people against the elites and the 1% super rich.

Here are some of the high points of her record:

1981: elected to the National Committee of the Hunger Strike campaign, along with others like Bernadette Devlin, fighting for political status for Bobby Sands and his comrades.

1983: first female shop steward



in Dublin Bus and Dublin Branch secretary of the National Bus and Railworkers Union.

1984-87: organised solidarity pickets and collections for the Dúnnes Stores strikers against Apartheid

1984-5: supported campaign for the British Miners Strike which raised many thousands of pounds.

1990: worked with Gateaux Bakery strikers who occupied the bakery against job losses for over a year.

1992: played a key role in the struggle for abortion rights around the X Case and all the protests of the pro-choice campaign.

Early 2000s: played leading role in the Anti-Bin Tax campaign and built mass campaign in Ballyfermot/Inchicore, jailed in Mountjoy along with other activists for direct action.

2003: key role alongside Richard Boyd Barrett in the Irish Anti War Movement which organized the biggest anti war protests in history.

2005-8: worked closely with the local people in Mayo in the magnificent Shell to Sea campaign.

2009: elected to represent Ballyfermot/Drimnagh on Dublin City Council. She is vocal on many local and national issues, works closely with the Traveller Community and consistently opposes austerity and cutbacks.

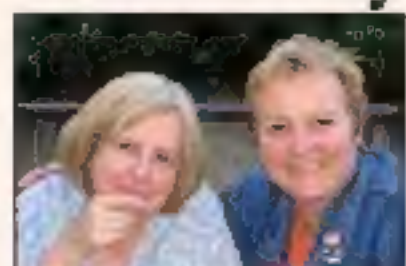
2011-13: played leading role in Campaigns against the Household Charge and the Property Tax, addressing meetings all over the country and chairing some of the Campaigns largest rallies and demonstrations.

Brid is a proud member of Unite the Union and an activist in the Dublin Branch.



This outstanding record shows that Brid Smith not only talks the talk, but walks the walk. Her policies, principles and experience make her the ideal candidate to defend the interests of ordinary people against the Eurocrats and the Troika.

What they say about Bríd Smith



Bernadette McAliskey: "People Before Profit are a class campaign."

Brid Smith is a class candidate. She is not seeking to be another career politician.

She is campaigning, organising and building for a Republic where people matter more than greed, profits and property.

The very smallest thing you can do to effect change is to vote for Brid Smith. It would be even

better if you could get involved in building the alternative to austerity."

Richard Boyd Barrett TD: "We need to build a national alternative to the establishment parties. Our organisation, People Before Profit, is growing and Brid Smith has played a central role in this. If you agree with the

BRÍD SMITH'S PLEDGE

"I pledge to take only the average worker's wage and donate the rest of the huge MEP salary to campaigning for workers rights."

policies I have been advocating in the Dáil, then vote People Before Profit. If you are fed up with the betrayals of the Labour Party and want a new voice for working people, then vote Brid Smith No.1."

Jimmy Kelly, Irish Regional Secretary Unite the Union: "I am

proud to support Bríd Smith in her campaign to represent Dublin in the European Parliament. Bríd has a track record of social and political activism second to none. This year, let's make our vote count by voting for someone who will make the voices of working people heard."

In the Spotlight

The People Before Profit Alliance will be standing 43 candidates in the up-coming local elections. This makes PBPA one of the largest left-wing organisations in the country. The PBPA also has the highest percentage of female candidates with 17 or 40%. Here we interview a number of our activists hoping to make the breakthrough in May.



Joe Murphy

Question - Joe you have made the decision to go with PBPA after in depth discussions with the team around you. These people are obviously very important to you so perhaps you could start by telling us why you chose to run under the PBPA banner?

It was only in the last few years that I became politically aware, through things like the Household Tax and the local Anti-Property Tax campaign.

The more active I became, the more I realised that people have to stand up for what they believe in society.

Over time, more and more people asked me to run in the elections, but they wanted me to stand as an independent. People are rightly sick of political parties and lots of them thought that we should go it alone as a principled voice for ordinary people.

Others in the campaign, myself included, worried that an independent is just that – someone with no real network of support behind them and not really answerable to anyone – not even the people who elected them.

PBPA convinced me that there is a middle ground.

On the one hand there are strong principles that everyone can fight for, but this is matched with a lot of local democracy.

PBPA promised me that the local campaign would be making the decisions and they have proven true to their word.

Today a lot of people have actually

come up to me saying how happy they are that we decided to go with PBPA.

They understand it is a grassroots bottom up organisation and so long as they feel like they have the power, there is a nice balance of local input and national support.

PBPA ticked all the boxes I needed to be ticked – no party whip; getting your community involved and helping people to help themselves.

Question - You mentioned the Campaign Against Household and Water Taxes (CAHWT) as your political starting point. Donegal had one of the best campaigns in the entire country; do you think this will be a major factor in the up-coming elections?

Absolutely. Although the CAHWT was defeated, it makes sense for those who fought against the tax to challenge those political parties who want to uphold it.

People have become strongly politicised and they are beginning to know whose side a lot of these politicians are on.

After all, why should the Donegal campaign, which has done so much to resist household charges and austerity stand aside and give a free run to the likes of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour.

Over the last three years I think we have shown that the people in Donegal are not 'yes men' and if elected on 23 May I will have the interests of these people at heart.

PBPA will continue to uphold the principles that stated the campaign. We



will not vote for a budget that will bring cuts to Donegal even if that means giving up our seats.

The people here have suffered massive cuts over the years and it has to stop.

Although councillors have no decision-making powers, in the executive sense, we will not stand over another

austerity budget in Donegal County Council.

Question - What vision for your local community do you have and how does this fit into the national agenda of PBPA?

Well in lots of ways the local is the

national at a smaller scale.

Take the issue of childcare.

Children with disabilities and/or special educational requirements across Ireland face a huge challenge in availing of a preschool education which is tailored to suit their individual needs.

Two of Donegal specialist preschools for children with disabilities have been closed and the last remaining specialist preschool in Letterkenny faces an uncertain future beyond 2015.

Mainstream preschools do not have the resources or specialist capacity at present to provide an equal learning experience for children with special needs.

We need to retain at least one specialist preschool for children with complex disabilities in Donegal, but this is also true throughout the country.

No one area has been singled out for special attention.

Throughout the country people are suffering and so whatever affects people at a local level is bound to be affecting others right across the country.

PBPA wants to join all of the dots and we in the Donegal campaign are happy to play our part in that. As the saying goes, people's needs before bankers' greed.

■ Joe Murphy is standing in the Inishowen area of Donegal. He can be reached at 086 8480254 or at seamusmvmurphy@gmail.com. You can also follow him @ Joseph J Murphy and/or People Before Profit Donegal on Facebook.

Tina MacVeigh

Question - Tina you are a longstanding member of the People Before Profit Alliance, but what initially drew you into the organisation?

Answer - I have been an active member of the PBPA since 2007. I work in community education and over the years, despite many hours spent volunteering in homeless charities, I came to realise that poverty is a consequence of the type of social, political and economic system we have created and not automatically the fault of the individual.

If we really want to create a society where people are treated with dignity and respect, where our human and social needs are valued and where all of us are treated as equal in integrated communities, then we need to fundamentally change the social, economic and political culture that we have come to accept without question.

This was why, when I first came across People Before Profit at an anti-war demonstration I thought to myself, what a great name!

People's needs have to come first and not those of the so-called free market.

If we put humans and their humanity at the centre of the circle, then everything follows from this.

People Before Profit were the ones on the ground building campaigns with people in communities and creating a radical and principled grassroots movement of resistance.

So I joined the organisation and I have never looked back.

Since joining I have been involved in many campaigns for public transport, special education supports, home help services, save our forests, anti-racism and integration to name but a few.

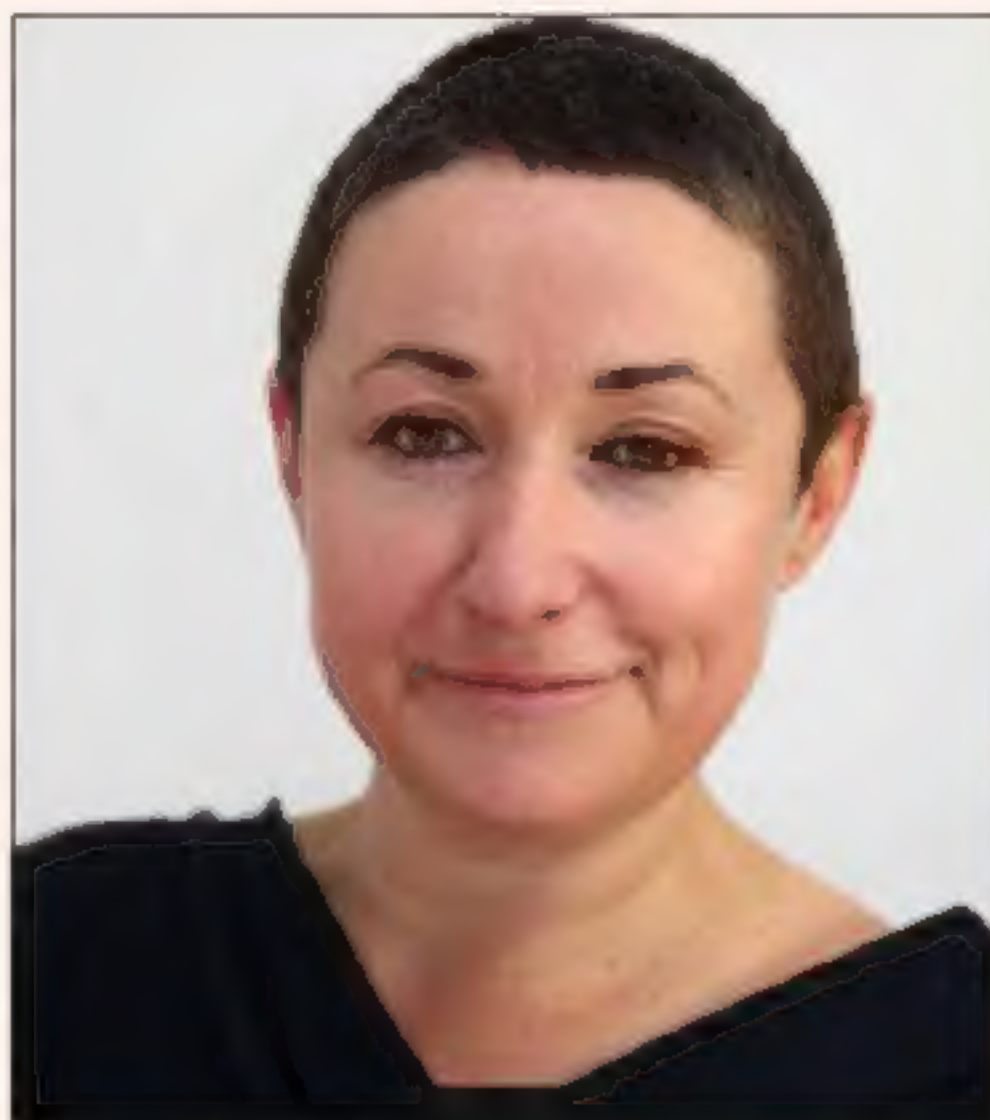
Most recently I have been heavily involved in the Campaign Against Home and Water Taxes and am now involved in a campaign that is against the privatisation of water.

PBPA is calling for an alternative model of public ownership that focuses on conservation and the provision of a safe, sustainable and effective water distribution system that is publicly owned.

Question - Your experiences in many campaigns are obviously standing to you, but what you would say are the key themes/concerns/worries of people that you are meeting on the campaign trail?

Answer - It is a privilege to have the opportunity to talk to so many people while out canvassing. And it is amazing the amount of time people take to talk to us.

Having said that, it is also difficult to hear the hard stories of austerity and disillusion - people with disabilities facing repossession; working mothers who can't afford to feed their children; long-term unemployed men who describe themselves as broken; pensioners who have to sell off the homes they have lived in all their lives as things like the



property tax have pushed them into poverty.

I would say people are at once angry, very angry, betrayed by Labour and disillusioned with politics.

But you do get the sense that we are

giving people a bit of hope when we talk to them about what People Before Profit stands for. People expect corruption, austerity, cynicism from politicians now and we have to re-set people's expectations by bringing integrity, accountability,

inclusion, democracy and resistance into local and national politics.

Question - Each of these issues are integral to the PBPA so perhaps we can finish by asking you about the vision you have for your local community after the elections in May?

Answer - Above all else, I am committed to a local democracy that benefits communities, not elites.

My vision for the area I live, work and am politically active in, is one where those who want to be involved in their local democracies, can be.

This means that the structures and resources of the Council will have to be used in the best interest of communities.

To get this we will have to make a start at facilitating participation in the work of the council and make the work of council real by connecting it to the issues in people's lives.

If policies are negatively affecting people, then we will have to continue to campaign with those affected out on the streets. People Before Profit believe that it is by people working together to address the issues that affect their lives and their communities that we will bring about real change.

This is what I also believe in.

■ Tina is standing in the Crumlin/Kimmage Ward. She can be reached @ Tina tinymv@gmail.com and on Facebook @ Tina MacVeigh.

A Life in Activism -

Deirdre Wadding



Question - Deirdre you are one of 17 women running for PBPA in the upcoming elections. Would it be fair to say that you choose to stand on the basis of your experience in the CAHWT?

Actually I've been very political all of my life. I've never been one of those people who say 'I'm not political'; as I believe the business of life itself is political.

The very act of questioning the status quo, of daring to be different, of speaking out for what we believe in and against what we perceive as wrong or unjust, is a political act.

In my teaching career I was a very active union member and was involved in issues related to 'Travellers' rights, being involved for a while in the Education committee at Pavee Point and serving as Chairperson of the Association of Teachers of Travelling People.

In addition, I was a member of the Inner City Teachers' Group which was very active in campaigning for better provisions for disadvantaged schools in the Inner City area of Dublin.

I also took part in many protests and actions over that time (including the infamous Poll Tax march) both here and in London where I served as NUT rep. for the school I worked in.

I settled into family life in '93 and made the decision to be a stay at home mother, which in no way conflicted for me with my feminist principles.

During that period I got involved in the campaign to establish a women's refuge in Wexford, doing the Women's Aid training course and organising Arts fundraisers for the refuge campaign.

I got involved with the campaign to

support and free Teresa Tracy, a pensioner from Westmeath who was jailed for refusing to allow the ESB to cut down 12000 trees on her land in order to facilitate a pylon link up.

After Teresa's successful release from Mountjoy and the subsequent closing of the support camp, the household charges resistance was kicking off.

I went to a meeting in Wexford of about 600 people and when I heard Brid Smith talking I was mighty impressed.

I went forward that night and gave my name to get more involved as I did in no uncertain terms.

Question - This is an extremely impressive list of activity so why did you eventually choose to join up with the PBPA?

Throughout all of my activism 'life', I never wished or felt the need to join a political party.

Particularly during the period of activity with CAHWT, I was very committed to being non-party, as my policy was always to listen to everyone and if a motion made sense I voted for it.

As time went on, although I have respect for all the colleagues of all parties and none who put time and so much energy into CAHWT, I found that in terms of policy and action I felt a great affinity with those aligned with PBP.

The clincher I suppose was the decision for CAHWT to move in an electoral direction, as that decision plus Revenue's

involvement in collection of the local property tax weakened CAHWT greatly.

When I was approached to run for PBP I was initially reluctant and unsure whether it would compromise my independence.

However here I am and I'm glad despite all the pressure that I took the chance, because I really believe in the integrity of PBP and its commitment to stand with the people in our fight to obtain justice and equality.

Question - What experiences have you had on the door steps?

If I had doubts about going forward for election (I had!), I now feel stronger than ever about bringing a voice for the people into the chamber.

The stories of misery and struggle on



A bit of creative writing on wet cement around the Meter casing this morning. No meter inside! I refused to allow it! The workers were grand lads and stood back while I wrote it and said they thought I was dead right! :-) Deirdre

the doorsteps cannot be overstated.

I have heard struggling lone parents, so far all mothers, elderly people on the point of tears telling me how much their phone bills have increased, the loss of medical cards by those who really need them including my own father and a woman in Wexford town who is undergoing cancer treatment. Over and over people say how worried they are about the water charges coming in, they just have no more to give.

The old people in particular break my heart.

One elderly frail birdlike wisp of a woman said to me 'I have nothing left out of my pension! I pay everything and there's nothing left'.

She doesn't know how she'll pay for water and she can't let the landline go because like many older folk, she needs a landline for her alarm and emergency pendant.

We have also found many members of the immigrant community do not realise they have a vote in the local elections and we have been bringing supplementary registration forms with us when canvassing.

Question - Finally Deirdre how do you see PBPA developing in your area over the coming months and years?

If elected, I want the people of Wexford to know that there is someone who will stand with them and put their interests first.

To do this I pledge to actively seek in every way possible to address the issues I have been hearing about over the last couple of months.

Some of this can be done in the chamber.

However much of it will require activity on the streets and communities.

For example, I would like to get a protest of the fishing community organised on a national level with Kilmore Quay leading the way, supported by PBP.

These fishing communities have been decimated by successive government policies as

small scale local fisheries have no chance of competing with the big players on factory ships.

I would also like to push to have something done about a medical waste dump that should never have been given planning permission.

The current Green Party councillor lives in the Estate affected and has been working hard on the issue.

I have pledged not to play party politics on any such issue affecting health and wellbeing and would happily support any action to solve the issue.

I will encourage and stand with all those fighting to have medical cards reinstated.

I would also like to think that I could pull some of the other councillors a little further to the left if I am part of the council and therefore hopefully put forward more people centred motions such as calling for a differential rates system, a halt and reversal of any privatisation of council services and to put pressure through council and active protests on local businesses not to operate the JobBridge scheme.

On Mayday we have a People's Assembly and celebration at the Locknut Memorial gates in the heart of Wexford town and that is where I will invite the people of Wexford to have their say and to tell me what it is they want to see happen in our town and district.

Luckily, so far we have been getting a very positive response on the doorsteps.

One of the most often repeated lines is 'as long as you're not Labour! When we explain our policies and what it is we stand for, a huge majority of those canvassed say they will give us a vote.'

Hopefully they will, but it is also important for people to know that PBP is dedicated to making people's lives better with them in the lead.

Council seats are important, but so too is the direct participatory forms of democracy that I have engaged in all of my life.

■ Deirdre is standing in Wexford to get a seat in the Wexford Co. Council. She can be reached on Facebook @ www.facebook.com/deirdrewaddingpbpa.



On the campaign trail

Brian Finucane in Listowel Co Kerry.

Question - Oh Brian, perhaps you could start by telling us what first attracted you to the PBPA Alliance?

WELL for me it's actually quite simple, PBPA stands as a real alternative for those of us who want change - a chance for real people power.

I was sick of being promised democratic change by political gangsters, who only want an easy number.

Because of these experiences, when I was first introduced to PBPA I was sceptical, thinking here we go again, false promises and more of the same.

But as I began to see the people involved and the same questions and worries coming to the forefront of their political meetings (questions that have crossed my mind many times), I began to realise that these people think the same as me.

The only way to make a better world is to fight for it.

The only way to win this world is to build a movement from the grassroots upwards.

The bigger parties have money and influence.

We have to fight with the strengths that we have and that is the power of ordinary people.



All of this became very practical very quickly. PBPA is also a very inclusive organisation - they never leave anybody out.

Since I joined during the campaign against household and water taxes I have never looked back. I have found my calling in political life and it's the People Before Profit Alliance. I never leave home without it now!

Question - Of all the campaigns, your's seems to have been the most successful at generating local media attention. How have you managed to make such a splash?

My constituency is absolutely massive so I had to think strategically. Luckily, I have quite a good relationship with the media in Kerry.

This actually began with some simple advice I got from a friend. First, I contacted the local media and introduced myself to the news reporter for my area.

Then I invited him out for a coffee (try to get a day when they are not so busy in order to get their full attention). On the day, I brought information of myself with a photo (the vanity of it all!).

However, this is now used regularly for the numerous pieces I have managed to get into the papers.

Over the last few weeks I have had the front page of the *Kerryman* (over flooding in my area), a spread in the *Sunday World* and an article in the *Kerry*

Eye. I think once the ball gets rolling it gets easier to get their attention, but if I was to give any advice I would say to strike up a conversation with a reporter if possible and see if there is something you both may have in common, remember reporters often have egos and that can work to your advantage.

I was lucky that I hit it off with two reporters but I also make sure to read the papers and keep my nose to the ground in order to chase up things they might find interesting.

The issue of local post offices is obviously important in rural areas and by highlighting the lack of support being given by elected representatives I think I struck a real cord in the community.

I also try to write the pieces as well as possible. Remember there have been cut backs in the papers too so they are often looking for a story.

One last thing is important. I only have one rule which is to never speak about anything that I don't want printed. This might seem obvious but once you've said something there is no going back on it. After all the media is the media and there job is to tell stories!



Seamus O' Boyle in Sligo



Before Profit is the way that it is bottom up organisation instead of being top down.

Unlike most parties in Ireland, we have met as a group for 15 weeks and there is great energy and good minds that all have the one thing in common, which is to rid ourselves of the corruption and crooked system and replace it with a people's Government.

Question - You mention the energy within your campaign-group, what are the main issues/concerns for people as you go about campaigning?

I think the main message coming from the people we engage with, is that the local elections is an opportunity to punish Fianna Gael and especially

The Labour Party. People's ability to meet day-to-day bills and expenses has been decimated.

I'm sure it's the same everywhere, but for the people in Sligo, stealth taxes alongside increases in bin charges, water

charges, and property taxes have been hard to take.

Lots of people also mention things like cuts to their schools, their health services, their social welfare payments etc.

Finally cuts to schemes run by the Community Welfare Officers that used to give help with emergencies like E.S.B. Bills, Furniture, Bed Clothes needs, are really hurting people. Many families tell us they simply have no money left at the end of the month.

Question - Clearly there is a lot to do, so finally Seamus how do you see the PBPA growing and developing in Sligo over the coming months and years?

In essence, I see a vision of a community where people take more control of decisions that are made on their behalf.

More than that, I believe that all decisions should be transparent and above board.

People before Profit are based on these principles as I have already mentioned,

which is one of the reasons I actually joined them.

I feel that unless you have proper grass roots involvement, eventually the people you represent will lose the trust that is needed in a healthy democracy.

Instead of what has happened now and in the past, where elected politicians only meet with the elite groups in Ireland, the rich and the powerful, we want real genuine participatory democracy.

This will hopefully get rid of one of the most corrupt systems in all of Europe.

The People Before Profits way of taking power with the people, is the only way to make sure that it doesn't end up in the hands of a small elite.

People before Profit don't have all the answers, but we are starting to build a proper working class movement and winning a seat in the local elections would be a start to a whole new way of doing politics in our great country.

Question - Although you have been centrally involved in anti-austerity politics for a long time, it was relatively recently that you decided to stand for the PBPA - perhaps we could start with your reasons for doing so?

As you say, I have been active in my local community for over 30 years.

In that time I have been involved in various campaigns from issues like, free Nicky Kelly, supporting the Hunger Strikers, fighting for our Cancer Services, supporting treatment of Victims of State Children's Home - right the way through to supporting left wing movements fighting for freedom in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile etc.

Over the last 5-6 years most of my campaigning has been against the on-going austerity.

I thought things were bad before, but the state of this country since 2008 takes some beating.

What annoys me most is that the

people who caused the crash have shifted the debt onto the rest of us.

The people who get rich off this system caused the crash and then made sure that we all paid for it.

I live in a working class community and the effects on the unemployed, the marginalised and the disadvantaged have been sickening.

Basically, I have seen my community left in shreds by the Austerity Policies of Fianna Fail the Greens, Fianna Gael, and shamefully the Labour Party. I decided that someone had to do something and that if people wanted me to, I could be the figurehead in the local elections.

Initially the United Left was a banner that all groups came under to fight the Property Tax. Since then, I have attended meetings by Richard Boyd Barrett and was impressed with the way the meetings were run and with what he and others had to say. I have been around the PBPA ever since.

What attracts me most to People

in Labour's coffin!

VOTE PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT



No Recovery for the Poor

By Michael Wallace

THE latest figures from the Central Statistics Office have shown that more than 750,000 people are living in poverty in Ireland, a grim and terrifying statistic when you understand that it also includes 220,000 children and 68,000 pensioners.

This is a truly disgraceful monument to the Labour Party in Government. Successive budget cuts, begun under Fianna Fáil and continued under Fine Gael and Labour, have devastated the lives of tens of thousands.

This also reveals that the number of people living in consistent poverty has doubled since the crash began in 2008. The numbers experiencing two or more forms of enforced deprivation has almost trebled to 28% of the population between 2008-12.

Inequality

Unsurprisingly, the same findings have also shown an ever-widening gulf between the richest 20% and poorest 20% with the cost of the economic crisis heaped onto the backs of workers and the unemployed by endless cuts and tax hikes.

Consistent poverty was highest among the most vulnerable groups frequently targeted by the government and Denis O'Brien's news media: the unemployed (19.2 per cent); people unable to work due to illness or disability (17.6 per cent) and one-parent families.

In particular, lone parents households with children under 18 experienced the highest consistent poverty rate in 2012, at 17%, while Joan Burton was attacking the One Parent Family Allowance and increasing the pain still further.

Responding to these damning CSO findings, the Minister for 'Social Protection' hailed the 'critical importance of the social welfare safety net in protecting people against poverty.'

However, there was stony silence from her Department on the same report showing half of people living in below average private rented accommodation at risk of poverty. This is a figure almost certain to have worsened since Burton cut and



capped the rent allowance that's created an avalanche of homelessness and despair for thousands of families.

Further misery

On top of all this, the Fine Gael/Labour government has announced plans to impose further misery in the autumn.

Enda Kenny and his Labour Party allies play games in public and pretend to 'disagree' with each other ahead of the

local and European elections.

In reality, they are joined at the hip and fully committed to pressing ahead with another €2 billion in savage budget cuts and taxes. Meanwhile they will also introduce water charges to line the pockets of the super-rich by turning a basic human right into a profitable commodity for their super-rich friends (see below).

Labour will put up a pretence of opposition before they roll over and play dead.

With disposable income having now collapsed by over €3,000 per household, the last thing people need is to be forced to pay €250 a year for a resource we need in order to exist, with further price hikes, and the outright privatisation of water down the line, a certainty.

Why should we suffer any more for the crimes of the rich while they walk away scot free from the cuts, courthouses and the carnage they're responsible for?

We need to smash the parties who support these water charges and austerity budgets in the elections and then build a campaign of resistance to take the massive anger out there onto the streets in the major demonstration when this government creeps back to Dail Eireann on September 20th.

See more at: <http://www.swp.ie/content/new-poverty-figures-expose-labour-party-complete-failure#sthash.3vs1a2yK.dpuf>

Water charges - Elites on the gravy train

By Kieran Allen

FROM October 2014, you will have to pay for your water. The bills will arrive a few months later in January and there will be a flat charge of €100 and an extra charge depending on usage. It will come to about €300 a year. But all of this is merely a prelude to a sneaky form of privatisation.

Water privatisation was attempted in many countries in the 1990s but it has fallen into disrepute. The result is that more sophisticated methods of 'hollowing out' the public sector have emerged. Irish Water, as a Public Utility model is one of them. Here is how it works:

All the assets of Ireland's local authorities have been transferred to Irish Water, which at present functions as a division of Bord Gáis. These assets are used as collateral and the company goes to the 'capital markets' of the world. 'Capital markets' are code words for large corporations and rich people who provide money for a cut of the profits.

These wealthy investors get a share of the commercial profits of Irish water – but they can also avoid public hatred against privatisation by sheltering under a public utility model.

When profit becomes the key driver, Irish Water will try to squeeze as much from people as they can. They have already acknowledged that water charges will increase if people start using less water.

Water and wastewater treatment is already heavily privatised through the use of Public Private Partnerships. These schemes mean that private companies get to run services risk free for 20 years – and there is no public access to the exact commercial deals they get from the state.

Currently, there are 66 PPPs in operation in the Irish water service. Irish Water's



declared purpose is to increase this private sector involvement. It will do this through 'Service Level Agreements' and direct outsourcing. Bill payment to Irish Water has already been outsourced to the non-union firm, Abtran.

Denis O'Brien wins again

Siemens offered to meter the whole country for Irish Water at a cost that would be recouped in the long term. But Phil Hogan, the former fund raiser for the Fine Gael party, said No. Instead one of the major contracts to fit meters went to a company owned by Denis O'Brien.

This is the same man whom a High Court Judge, claimed, 'beyond all doubt' had been given 'substantive information' by another former Fine Gael fundraiser, Michael Lowry, that was 'of significant value and assistance to him in securing the (Esat) license'.

Just before it was announced that Bord Gáis would be running Irish meters, one of O'Brien's investment vehicles bought Siteserv for €45 million – even though another company had made a higher bid. As a sweetener, the former Anglo-Irish Bank wrote off €100 million of the debt the company owed it.

Then, lo and behold, Siteserv – aka Sierna – won a contract to install meters.

On the Gravy Train

Irish Water has created a massive gravy train. Even before the bills arrive, the company has become a super-Quango. Those who pay water charges must subsidise consultants, profiteers and over paid executives. Here are some of the winners.

John Tierney: This former Dublin City manager spent €90 million of public money in building a waste incinerator at Poolbeg, which may never see the light of day. €30 million of that money went to RPS for carrying out propaganda and gaining support through 'stakeholder consultation'. Despite this waste, Tierney landed a €200,000 a year job at Irish water.

Gerry Grant: The former boss of RPS, who had worked closely with Tierney, has become one of the top managers of Irish Water.

Twenty Nine Executives: All earn over €100,000 in Irish water.

Yoga instructor: Unnamed but got €200 for conducting an hour long laughing and wellness class for Irish Water Staff.

IBM: This gigantic US anti-union firm got €44 million in consultancy contracts. Accenture: Got €17 million for such items as 'guiding principles' and 'programme management, which apparently include liaising with the government.

Ernst and Young: This company signed off on Anglo-Irish dodgy accounts – yet they got €4.6 million from Irish Water.

How to defeat these charges

Make the local and Euro elections on May 23rd pay-back day. If Labour is destroyed in as many areas as possible, it will de-stabilise this rotten government. Every vote for the People Before Profit Alliance is a vote for active resistance to these charges. People



Before Profit is an anti-water charges party that will use all elected positions won in foment resistance and civil disobedience to these charges.

Prepare for mass protests and civil disobedience. Mass protest and civil disobedience stopped an Irish government building a nuclear power station at Carnmore Point.

More recently, mass protests stopped the sell-off of Coillte.

The people of Bolivia have shown how protest and escalating civil disobedience could topple a government that wanted to privatise their water supply.

The first major protest will be on 20 September.

Socialist Worker

Beyond Orange and Green - Time for Change

Vote No. One

GERRY

CARROLL

People Before Profit



The Power to Change West Belfast is in...

Your Hands



Vote PBP
Gerry Carroll
May 22nd

GERRY Carroll is standing as People Before Profit candidate for the Black Mountain ward, West Belfast, in the upcoming council election in May. His candidacy offers voters a welcome alternative to the politics of privatisation and austerity which have defined the current period.

Gerry's campaign has gained momentum in recent weeks in a constituency where People Before Profit have earned a reputation as enthusiastic opponents to privatisation and cutbacks. Recently the area has witnessed the devastating impact of austerity with the Royal Victoria Hospital's A and E ward being declared at crisis point.

Council plans to privatise leisure centres, and an ongoing dispute over the redevelopment

ment of Casement Park, have also made the headlines locally. Both issues have resulted in large protests outside both the SDLP and Sinn Féin's offices in Andersonstown. Gerry Carroll and People Before Profit have played a key role in these campaigns.

"People are fed up with their local politicians and that's been reflected by the recent protests", said Gerry. "They expect people to come out and vote for them no matter what but there is growing disillusionment. People can see for themselves the effect the cuts are having on the community."

"We have a situation where five deaths at the Royal are being investigated because patients have been forced to wait up to 29 hours

to see a doctor. It's not good enough. We're talking about cuts to services which literally mean life or death. They say the money is not there to reopen the City A and E but we know that it is."

"If they have £60 million to give to Titanic Belfast, they have money to fund the health service. We're hoping to shake things up in the council election this year. If the anger we are finding on the doors is reflected in the vote in May then we are in with a chance."

Support for Gerry Carroll's campaign has grown in recent weeks after a number of local protests such as Hands Off Our Leisure Centres. It won a crucial success when a group of 100 protesters marched from Andersonstown Leisure Centre to the SDLP's office to protest plans to privatise the city's leisure facilities. A few days later Belfast City Council deferred the vote on privatisation - no small testament to the effect of the sound of marching feet.

Another local issue, and one which highlights Sinn Féin hypocrisy more than any, has been the question of the redevelopment of Casement Park. Residents who submitted over 1,000 signed letters against the redevelopment have been ignored by Sinn Féin, who have been dishonest and underhand, remaining committed to pursuing the GAA's agenda

behind closed doors, while staying infuriatingly silent about it publicly. Residents have had no other option but to protest and have now raised enough money to challenge the decision legally through a judicial review.

It is particularly rich for a party like Sinn Féin, which prides itself on defending residents rights during loyalist marching season, to readily trample those same rights when it suits their corporate agenda. The Casement issue has shown that despite their rhetoric at the heart of Sinn Féin lie the interests of big business.

The plan they have endorsed would see 80ft stands towering over local houses, in many instances blocking out all the natural sunlight. To add insult to injury residents from the areas most affected, Mooreland Park and Stockman's, were outraged at having received a Sinn Féin leaflet through their doors highlighting the arbitrary issue of dogs fouling the streets. The disregard Sinn Féin have shown for the consultation process has been nothing short of disgraceful and People Before Profit have been organising within the community to protest this hypocrisy.

"Our local politicians have become far too comfortable and are taking people for granted. The anger on the doors around the

Casement issue has been palpable. There is already a problem with congestion in Andersonstown that is not even taken into consideration. But the thing that is hardest for residents to stomach is the sheer height of the stands. The plans for construction should be halted immediately and a real consultation with residents must take place. We hope residents will express their anger at the polls by voting People Before Profit."

May's council election takes place against a backdrop of cuts to public services and privatisation. In a period when jobs are scarce, wages are low, and the costs of groceries, rent and fuel continue to rise, our politicians remain committed to austerity and an agenda of privatisation. They tell us we have to put up with cuts and there is no other option but in the council election in Black Mountain ward there is.

We can elect a fighting and principled campaigner to send an unequivocal message to politicians. Gerry Carroll is standing against austerity and against privatisation. He is for taxing the rich and investing money in public services.

A vote for Gerry Carroll on May 22 is a vote for a different way - one which puts people before profit. Use your vote wisely.

